



November 8, 2005

## **Johnston man is sentenced for \$18,500 in counterfeit hundred dollar bills**

A federal judge has sentenced **Christian A. Sarria**, of Johnston, to 18 months in federal prison for passing counterfeit \$100 bills. Sarria was arrested in February after he tried to pass 20 counterfeit hundreds at a bank. Providence Police and Secret Service agents seized an additional \$16,500 in bogus \$100 bills from Sarria's car and home.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentence, which U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith imposed on November 4 in U.S. District Court, Providence. Sarria, a Colombian national, is subject to deportation after he is released from prison.

In August, a federal jury found Sarria guilty of three charges – attempting to pass counterfeit Federal Reserve notes and two counts of possessing counterfeit Federal Reserve notes. During the trial, Assistant U.S. Attorneys Adi Goldstein and James H. Leavey presented evidence that, on February 10, Sarria attempted to pass \$2,000 in counterfeit \$100 dollar bills to a teller at a Citizens Bank branch on Academy Avenue in Providence.

After withdrawing \$6,700 in cash, which he'd asked to be in large bills, Sarria asked the teller to change twenty of the hundreds into twenty dollar bills. The teller, who has 18 years experience at the bank, noticed that the bills weren't the same ones she'd given him and suspected that they were counterfeit.

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The bank manager called Providence Police and a police officer found 17 more suspect hundreds mixed among cash under the front seat of Sarria's car.

Secret Service agents later found an additional \$14,800 in counterfeit hundreds in a wheelbarrow behind Sarria's home on Doyle Avenue in Johnston.

Secret Service agents concluded that the counterfeit bills in Sarria's possession were of the same type produced by "experienced, high-quality counterfeiters in or from Colombia."

Agents also determined that Sarria had recently returned to the U.S. from Colombia.

The **Secret Service** and **Providence Police** investigated the case. The **Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement** provided assistance. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Goldstein and Leavey prosecuted the case.

-30-

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